

Mary Gotcher
Director of Nurses, Northern Division

I began the interview with Ms. Gotcher asking her about the normal flow of disciplinary actions and she informed me that usually they go through her. She indicated that she did review the action recommended for Ms. Kelly by LaVonia Wright, the nurse manager of Kelly's unit. She says she believes there is adequate documentation regarding Ms. Kelly's performance for quite some time that indicates some corrective action needed to be taken. She went on to say that Ms. Kelly has several years of evaluations that indicated a pattern of non-performance and this had been documented by several different nurse managers. She says that Ms. Kelly has good clinical skills but the desire is for her to meet all of her expectations.

Ms. Gotcher stated that Ms. Kelly's administrative skills were lacking, which has nothing to do with her clinical skills. Was not involved in the conversation with her regarding the demotion, i.e., she, Ms. Gotcher did not participate in the initial conversation when Ms. Kelly was told she was going to be demoted but did respond to the appeal, upholding the demotion.

Ms. Gotcher when asked about the situation with Ms. Ferguson she said that Ms. Ferguson made a bad clinical call. Did not do what she would have wanted her to do, i.e., she should have seen the patient in the clinic, perform a written assessment of the injury which would have required her to undress him. She says she tries to get all of the nurses to look at the worse case scenario and Ms. Ferguson did not do that. She went on to indicate that the assessment was necessary to insure that no neurovascular problems existed.

I asked Ms. Gotcher if the patient filed a grievance as a result of the incident and she indicated she did not know. But she wanted to emphasize that there is a need for medical staff to respond when a patient presents with such a problem. And she feels that Ms. Ferguson did not and therefore it was necessary to get her attention. She did not believe that the nurse with Ms. Ferguson at the time, Paula, should have received any type of reprimand because she was still in training and it was ultimately Ms. Ferguson's responsibility. She thinks that Ms. Ferguson was negligent in calling the nurse on call when she was already here and could take care of the patient. She says that if Ms. Ferguson had done what she expected, she probably would have been on the site a mere additional 15 minutes.

She thought the offense was serious enough that it warranted more than simply a verbal warning and for that reason she gave her the written warning. She went on to say there is nothing in her file other than the write up, which was simply meant to get her attention.

EXHIBIT

D-54

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Regarding the issues with Jacklyn Fisher; she said that it was her desire to change the rotation of the nurse managers. She went on to say that part of the reason she wanted to do this is because David Watson kept telling her that things were not good at the Estelle Unit; he had had meetings with the staff and with Ms Fisher but things were not getting any better relative to morale amongst the staff. As a result, Ms. Gotcher decided to go down and check things out herself; she made plans to go down to talk with the staff and took Georgia Melton with her. She says they asked if anyone wanted to come speak to them, that it was not mandated, (totally voluntary). Ms. Gotcher said these meeting were held Jan. 17th and 18th and that she later met with Ms. Fisher to discuss the issues, this meeting occurred on Feb. 10th.

Ms. Gotcher said she was told by the employees that Ms. Fisher did things along racial lines and that there were security issues with the way she approached the job. She says they went on to say that Ms. Fisher made equipment changes without consulting the staff; that black employees were allowed to call her at home and that she promised black employees things that she did not provide to white employees.

Ms. Gotcher said she told Ms. Fisher she needed to have staff meetings to get people to work together and that she needed to seek their advice and be more open with them. I asked her if there were any minutes kept of the meeting with Ms. Fisher and if there was anything given to her in writing. She said she believed that Sandy Rader kept minutes of the meeting but nothing was formally given to Ms. Fisher in writing regarding expectations. She says that absolutely nothing changed regarding Ms. Fisher's style or behavior; eventually Mr. Watson told her to have a staff meeting.

Ms. Gotcher said because of Ms. Fisher, two assistant nurse managers quit, Ms. McCarty and Mr. Aguilar. She went on to say that the nurses that had initially raised concerns included Darby, Lauder, Anderson, Reagan, and Brantley, all nurses who were responsible for making assignments and that Ms. Fisher had stripped them of that responsibility.

I asked Ms. Gotcher about the people who had come and voiced the complaints against Ms. Fisher, I wanted to know specifically the racial makeup of the individuals; she told me she didn't see people based on their race and could not tell me what race they were. I asked her if she knew the makeup of the staff, she said the LVN's are a mixed group and the PCA's are mostly white. It was not all of the LVN's that complained but mostly the RN's who are also white.

After getting all of the complaints, Ms. Gotcher and Ms. Melton met with Ms. Fisher. Ms. Fisher and according Ms. Gotcher Ms. Fisher had many of the same complaints against the staff that complained against her. Ms. Gotcher gave Ms. Fisher a letter of expectations, with which she says Ms. Fisher disagreed.

Ms. Gotcher then met with Mr. Watson and based on everything they had they believed they needed to demote and move Ms. Fisher. Initially they were going to demote her to a

Nurse Clinician III but decided to change to an assistant nurse manager. She indicated that she spoke with John Pemberton before taking any action.

She went on to say that Mr. Watson defended Ms. Fisher for quite some while; that he was visiting with her and the asst. nurse managers but finally told Ms. Gotcher that he had done all he could.

She was not sure why there had never been a meeting of the leadership on the unit to address the issues. I asked her who the medical director was on the unit and she told me it was Dr. Vincent; she said it was implied that there might be something going on between Dr. Vincent and Ms. Fisher.

Ms. Gotcher stated that since they moved Ms. Fisher the turnover had slowed down, that the turnover had been contributed to her management style.

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